

Post Reporter

NO sign has yet been found of the two yachtsmen washed overboard the yacht Vyndi off Cape St Francis on Monday.

The exhaustive air and sea search has been called off for the skipper, Mr Peter Atkinson, 32, of Cape Town, and Mr Errol Breen, 35, of Durban.

The search involved the National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI), an Air Force Dakota and a police helicopter.

No sign of two yachtsmen washed overboard

After it was called off, the Dakota and police helicopter returned to Cape Town. A Port Elizabeth NSRI spokesman said their search team stood down at midday yesterday.

The Post's Cape Town correspondent reports that Mr Atkinson's fiancée, Miss Bronwyn Cole, said he had loved sailing, but had not

liked wearing a safety harness on deck.

The men were wearing lifejackets.

Miss Cole said wearing a harness at sea was not always practical.

"It's like having a leash on, it always gets caught and restricts you from manouvering properly. In rough seas you can't act

quickly and get sails down," she said.

She said Mr Atkinson was an experienced sailor who had been doing yacht deliveries for more than 10 years.

"If he had a choice he would probably have wanted to die on a yacht," a distraught Miss Cole said.

She is the mother of Mr

Atkinson's 19-month-old son, Rory.

She had sailed many trips with her fiancée.

Mr Breen was an inexperienced sailor on his first trip, she said.

The yacht had left the Royal Cape Yacht Club for Durban on Thursday.

The yacht's owner, Mr

Rob Upton, 29, and crew member Mr Rodney Briggs, 35, both from Durban, were asleep below deck when Mr Atkinson and Mr Breen were washed off deck.

The yacht was broadsided by a wave which knocked it over and ripped off the mast.

Mr Upton said he would remain in Port Elizabeth for "another day or two" to make arrangements for the transportation of the yacht to Durban.